

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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Considering how much the produce of the revenue is connected with the prosperity and comforts of the people, as evinced by their consumption of the articles on which it is levied, this continual increase in the revenue is an undeniable proof of the growing wealth and resources of the country. .... It will be recollect, that strong apprehensions were expressed, that the conclusion of the peace would be followed by a diminution of our commerce, and, consequently, of our revenue. "The event has happily proved, that such apprehensions were ill-founded." — The Doctor's Speech of the 10th of December, 1802.

[578]

## THE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC.

Since it must be evident to every reflecting person, that our ability to support the present contest, and, of course, that of preserving the throne of our Sovereign and our own liberties, depends, in a great degree, upon the pecuniary resources of the country, is not too much to hope, that, notwithstanding the dryness of the subject, an exposition of the true state of those resources will, at this time, meet with a serious consideration.

That the minister, now better known by the name of the Doctor, has, upon all convenient occasions, deceived the public on the several points belonging to this object, it has, as my readers will have observed, fallen to my lot frequently and repeatedly to show. On many of these points, however, the Doctor has still been believed; because the refutation of his statements and calculations depended upon facts, which could not, as yet, be ascertained; and, because, in such cases, the public, not making the distinction between the Doctor's character and that of former Chancellors of the chequer, have, from feelings of habitual becoming respect for persons high in office, concluded, that till his assertions were proved by facts, they ought to be credited, though opposed to the assertions and the arguments of other persons. The facts have, however, at last, come to light; and, founded upon these indubitable facts, I am about to offer to my readers a concise exposition of the actual state of our TRADE, VENUE, EXPENDITURE, and DEBT.

FIRST: with respect to the trade of the country, I beg leave to refer to that memorable speech of the Doctor, whence the motto of this paper has been chosen. I have no particular desire to recall the public attention to the apprehensions of those who thought that a diminution in our commerce could be produced by the peace; but, that such apprehensions were entertained must and ought to be remembered. The Doc-

tor, when he came to the Parliament with his flattering display of the 10th of Dec. 1802, could not, in the fulness, or, rather, the emptiness, of his vanity, forbear to make a triumphant allusion to those apprehensions, in the words contained in my motto. But, he was reminded immediately afterwards, that his triumph was ill-founded and would be of very short duration; for, that the opposers of the peace had never said that an immediate falling-off in our trade would take place, and that, the excess of trade in 1802, was owing, in a great degree, to temporary causes, to causes, the operation of which would cease with that very year.\*

— Time has been swift in visiting vengeance upon the Doctor. We have now, at the end of only sixteen months from the day when the thoughtless boaster rose crowing upon his tip-toes, an account, presented to the Parliament from his own office, in which all his estimates and all his promises are clearly proved to be false, and in which he is proved to have been grossly ignorant of the concerns entrusted to his management, or, to have intentionally deceived the nation, by whom he and his family are maintained, and the Sovereign, under whose authority he acts.

— Trade naturally divides itself under two heads, *imports* and *exports*. To form a just opinion as to the state of either of these, in any given year, we must compare their amount with the amount of the imports or exports of the preceding year. But, in the present instance, this mode of comparison is not sufficient for our purpose; because, if we should show, that, in the year 1803, the imports, or exports, have been much less in amount than they were in 1802, the safe politicians will exultingly remind us, that 1802 was a year of *peace*. To avoid this, we must take the three years ending with December 1803, which period, while it embraces the last year of last war, the year of peace, and the first year of this war, does also embrace the three years of the Doctor's

\* See Pol. Register, Vol. II. p. 224.

administration. — To begin then with the **IMPORTS**; their amount (exclusive of corn and other grain), in the official value, was as follows :

Imported in 1801... £24,145,500  
1802... 24,413,473  
1803... 20,634,099

The "official value" is only a sort of standard, or mode, which is made use of at the Custom-house, of rating, according to the quantity of the goods, the real value being very difficult to ascertain. Probably the real value is nearly double the official value, but, as to our present inquiry, that circumstance is of no importance. — The figures speak for themselves here, and much plainer than words possibly can. They show, not only that there has been an interruption to the Doctor's "continual increase," but, that the increase has been turned into a most alarming decrease; and, they show, that, if such an increase be "an indubitable proof" of the growing wealth and resources of "the country," the wealth and resources of this country are fast upon the decline. But, that description of persons, who may be called balance-of-trade-men, will, perhaps, assert, that a decrease in the imports is a mark of prosperity; and, I must confess, that such an assertion could not very consistently be contradicted by those who admit the principle of a balance of trade. At once, however, to blast the hopes which might arise from this source of deception, it is sufficient to state, that the decrease of imports has not taken place in articles which are the growth or produce of *other nations*, but, in those articles which are the growth or produce of our own West-India colonies; in the articles coffee, sugar, and rum, as will appear from the following comparative statement between the years 1801 and 1803 :

Coffee.	Sugar.	Rum.
1801 £4,416,822	£5,351,707	£420,845
1803.. 1,474,154	4,232,143	370,182
<hr/> 2,942,668	<hr/> 1,119,564	<hr/> 50,663
		1,119,564
		2,942,668

Decrease in the three articles £4,112,895

By looking back to the comparative statement of the total of the imports, during the three last years, it will be seen, that the year 1803 has fallen below that of 1801 in much about the amount of the decrease of these articles of the growth of our own colonies; so that, here is no source of comfort to the balance-of-trade-men, to those

wise-acres, who imagine, that the sending of valuable things out of the country to a greater amount than that of the valuable things received into the country is a proof of national prosperity; to these persons the present state of our imports affords no hope, because, as it has been shown, the decrease in the imports has been produced by a falling-off in the amount of the things coming from another part of our own dominions, and being the property of our fellow subjects. — The **EXPORTS** are divided into two classes, "*Foreign Merchandise*," and, "*British Produce and Manufactures*." The latter of these comes certainly more home to us than the former, but the former consists principally of the growth or produce of our own colonies, and, therefore, any falling-off in its amount must be regarded as of great consequence. The decrease in the amount of this class of goods exported will appear from the following statement :

Exported in 1801... £16,001,892  
1802... 19,127,833  
1803... 11,537,148

This decrease is almost incredible; and one would wonder how any minister could, after such estimates as those made by the Doctor in all his financial speeches, find the hardihood to present this statement to the House of Commons! But, the Doctor knows his men. — I am anxious to keep in view, that it is not a comparison between a year of *war* and a year of *peace* that I am making, but between 1801 and 1803, that is, between a year of the former war and a year of the present war. Nor do I wish to confine the comparison to the last year of the former war: take any year for seven years back, and you will find no one in which there was not more foreign merchandise exported than in the year 1803. The statement now presented, therefore, by exhibiting a comparative view of the different effect of war upon trade, *before*, and *after*, the treaty of Amiens, demonstrates the ruinous tendency of that compact, which tendency will, however, still more clearly appear when we come to examine into the nature of the decrease in the exports of our home produce and manufactures.

Exported in 1801... £25,699,809  
1802... 26,993,129  
1803... 22,252,101

Here the total of the exported British produce and manufactures in 1801 amounts to nearly three millions and a half more than in 1803; for, it is between these two years that I particularly desire to continue my comparison. And, in what articles of produce and manufactures has this decrease

taken place? Not in those which consist chiefly of materials first brought from other countries and afterwards wrought up in this; but, in those precisely, which are almost entirely the growth, and entirely the fabric, of this country: in *linens*, and particularly in *woollens*, the great staple commodity of England, as will appear by the following figures:

	Linens.	Woollens.
Exported in 1801	£1,009,194	£7,321,236
1802..	895,156	6,487,263
1803..	561,310	5,291,441

In the linens there is a decrease of nearly one-half, and in the woollens of something more than two-sevenths. There is a decrease of nearly one-half in wrought silks, and of one-third in the haberdashery and stockings. But, the woollens form the most important object of our consideration. They are made almost entirely of materials which are the growth of our fields, and the labour bestowed on them is entirely the labour of our people, a very considerable portion of whom are fed by the produce of this branch of trade.—In my letters to Mr. Addington, on the “fatal effects of the peace, with respect to the colonies, the commerce, and manufactures of this kingdom,” I endeavoured to prepare the public for the decrease, which has now taken place; and, I particularly pointed out the ruinous consequences which must, in a short time, result to the linen and woollen manufactures from the power which the peace had given to France of shutting out our goods from many countries, into which they found their way during the war.\* How my apprehensions were received by the lovers of “peace and commerce,” the public will recollect; and, the Doctor and the “solid young lord,” his coadjutor, may now begin to believe what I then told them: that “popular noise would avail nothing against the power of events;” and that, they would, in a very few years, be “compelled to listen to the curses of those whose plaudits now afforded them the means of misrepresenting and calumniating the opposers of that disgraceful treaty by which they had prolonged the duration of their ill-deserved power and emoluments.”—What, then, shall be asked ‘would you have had eternal war, for the sake of preserving trade; you, who are continually expressing your contempt for trade, and representing it as the ruin of the monarchy?’—As to this latter point, my opinion was nearly and consistently stated at the begin-

ning of Letter II. of the series just referred to. The whole discussion proceeded upon the presumption of the absolute necessity of maintaining the present system of what is called public credit; and, it is upon that presumption that I am, of course, now proceeding; otherwise, the decrease of which I have been speaking would certainly be considered as a favourable and a fortunate circumstance. And, with respect to ‘eternal war for the purpose of preserving our ‘trade,’ never did I utter such a sentiment; but, on the contrary, I had strongly reprobated the conduct of those, who, with the vain hope of extending our trade, submitted to disgraceful terms of peace. I contended for the preservation of the national honour and independence: these were my great objects: the discussions as to trade proceeded from a desire to forewarn the nation, that, in exchange for its honour and its safety, it had received and would receive nothing. My position was this, that, if I were compelled to take the question of peace, or war, merely as a pecuniary one, I would have continued the war, till I could have obtained a better peace; “because the “peace of Amiens would produce a diminution in our revenue more than proportionate to the reduction that such a peace “would enable us to make in our expenditure.”—To return to what more immediately concerns us, let me ask how the Doctor will be able to justify himself to the Parliament and the nation? The results, as above stated by me from the official papers, flatly contradict his predictions and his estimates. Will he plead general ignorance of the subject, or partial error? Either of them is, in a minister, and in a case of such magnitude, a crime. It is a crime for him to have taken upon him such an office, if he knew not how to discharge its functions; and, if he did know how to discharge them, it was a crime not to have duly discharged them. Will he say, that the decrease in our trade has been owing to the war? Why did he, then, declare war? Why did he not remain at peace? or, having resolved on war, why did he not take care, that this war, into which we have been brought during his administration, should not be more injurious to our trade than was the war, in which, at his entrance into power, he found us engaged? He will hardly contend, that we are acquiring more *glory*, or, that we enjoy greater *safety*, in this war than in the last. Therefore, as he found us in war, and has now brought us into war again, we have a right to demand of him, that he also place us where he found us with respect to trade.

\* See Letter III.

He will, perhaps, say, that it was not he, but the restless and insatiable ambition of the enemy, that again, and so soon, brought us into war. But did he not foresee, or ought he not to have foreseen, the consequences of this restless and insatiable ambition? Ought he not to have taken his measures accordingly, and to have prevented a new war, when it came, from placing our trade in a worse situation than that in which it was previous to the peace? Those who disapproved of the peace, have a right to charge him with the loss of that trade which we should have enjoyed by the continuation of the war; and those who approved of the peace, with the loss of that trade which we should have enjoyed by a continuation of the peace. The peace and the present war have taken place during his administration. He is answerable not only for the measures of his ministry, but for the consequences of those measures. We are to compare the state of the nation when he took the rule of it into his hands, with its present state; if we find its affairs improved he is entitled to that applause and to those honours and rewards which are given to great talents and meritorious actions; but, if the result of our inquiries be of exactly an opposite nature, he deserves censure and disgrace. Apply this rule to the trade of the country, we find, that, from a total \* annual importation of 27,300,000l. leaving out the minor parts, he has reduced us to an importation of 21,600,000l. that, from an importation of British colonial produce of 10,100,000l. he has reduced us to an importation of 5,900,000l. that, from an annual exportation of foreign merchandize amounting to 16,600,000l. he has reduced us to an exportation of 11,500,000l. that, from a total annual exportation of British produce and manufactures amounting to 25,600,000l. he has reduced us to an exportation of 22,200,000l. and, lastly, that, from an annual exportation of woollens, the great staple of our country, amounting to 7,300,000l. he has reduced us to an exportation of 5,200,000l. a sum nearly one million less in amount than that for which we exported woollens in the year 1798, having, as to this important branch of trade, caused us to make a retrograde motion over the space of five years.—Thus it is to be ruled by “safe politicians;” by men taken “from the middling classes of society.” When the glittering display of the 10th of Dec. 1802

was made to the Parliament, the low and little men were filled with exultation. They thought that the sway of mediocrity, not to say stupidity, was for ever established; and, they began to proclaim aloud, that great talents were an injury rather than an advantage to a government. Their triumph has, thank God! been of short duration. Thank God! the nation has already, and, I hope, before it is too late, been made to feel the effects of having listened to, and acted upon, this grovelling, this base and degrading nation. For this wholesome lesson we shall have to thank the Addingtons and the Jenkins: they have furnished us with a practical and never-to-be-forgotten proof of the folly of committing the affairs of a nation to the hands of low-bred, low-minded, talent-less men.

SECOND: the *Revenue* must ever, while the present system continues, thrive or decline with the trade. In speaking of the revenue, it will be necessary, in order not to embarrass the statements, to confine ourselves to the produce of the permanent taxes, in the first place, and for the purpose of comparing one year with another; and, afterwards, if required, to speak of the war-taxes. When the Doctor became minister, in 1801, there was an Income Tax existing, which tax was afterwards done away. There were also, in that year new permanent taxes imposed to a considerable amount, part of which did not come into full collection till the year 1802. The best way, therefore, will be to take the net produce of the permanent taxes, including the sum paid for corn-bounties, in 1802, and compare it with the net produce of the same taxes, in 1803, in which *same* I do not, of course, include, new taxes which came into collection in this latter year, and which did not come into collection in the former year.

Net produce in 1802 £29,164,945  
1803.. 27,743,526

Defalcation in 1803.. 1,421,419

There can be no error in this statement, unless the accounts laid before Parliament are false.—The net produce of all the taxes, in 1803, amounted to 30,710,747l. which, as the reader will perceive, surpasses the produce of 1802, by a little more than half a million; but, in the year 1803, new taxes to the amount of 2,967,219l. came into collection, and which did not come into collection at all in the year 1802; so that, though nearly three millions of taxes were added to the taxes in existence in 1803,

\* The East-India importations are not made up for last year, therefore, they do not enter, on either side, into any of these statements.

the total net produce was only half a million more than it was in that year; and, indeed, if we make the due allowance for depreciation of money, the net produce of 1803, notwithstanding the addition of nearly three millions of new taxes, did not surpass in the amount of one penny, the total net produce of 1802. This is, a pretty clear proof, that taxation, in the Doctor's hands, at any rate, cannot be carried much further. Great pains appear to have been taken to prevent a minute investigation as to the particular department, and particular taxes, in which this falling-off has taken place; but, as to the general conclusion it is not of much consequence what source has been first exhausted; whether the defalcation has taken place in the old or the new taxes, whether in the customs or the excise; whether people have sold their horses or left off drinking wine or shut out their day-light, or whether some have done the one or some the other; upon the *whole* there has been a defalcation; upon the whole, additional *impositions* have not produced additional *receipts*, much less have they produced those "*magnificent receipts*," which were anticipated by Lord Auckland.—The *War-Taxes* have failed in a still more conspicuous manner. These taxes were "*to inspire confidence at home and create respect abroad*." "But," said the Doctor, in his memorable bombastical budget-speech of the 13th of June last, "the pecuniary effect is not all, it will be a difference in another respect, the difference between a temporary and a permanent tax. It will have another effect also, that of convincing the enemy of this country, that it is *hopeless* for him to contend with our finances, that it is not in his power to affect us in that respect: it will have a still further effect, that of convincing the other powers of Europe, that they may safely join with us in a common cause of resistance against the common enemy, for, that the resources of this country are such as to give full security for the punctual discharge of any engagement it may enter into, and this is an object for which I have in view some provisions." —What provisions the Doctor had in his wise head has never yet come to light, but, most assuredly, he has not produced, in the other powers of Europe, any disposition to make a common cause with us; nor, shall we wonder at this, when we have examined into the produce of the war-taxes, that source of "*confidence at home and of respect abroad*." —The war-taxes were estimated to produce 12,500,000l.

a year\*; but, as they were not imposed till June, 1803, their produce, *in that year*, was estimated only at 4,500,000l. There was, indeed, half the year to come, at the time of imposing the taxes, but as the two first quarters of any tax are seldom so productive as the subsequent ones, it appeared reasonable to take the half year's produce at 4,500,000l. but, it appears, from the official accounts, that the amount of this produce was only 1,800,000l. This defalcation was owing, in some part, to the non-collection of the new income-tax; but, in whatever degree this cause operated, the blame must be attributed to the minister, who laid the tax and who proposed, and caused to be enacted, the law which was intended to enforce its collection. In short, we have nothing to look at but the effect; and, here we find, that, in 1803, the war-taxes, instead of producing 4,500,000l. did actually produce no more than 1,800,000l. —The Doctor, when called upon, in Parliament, to explain the cause of this fearful defalcation, is said, in the newspapers, to have stated, that a mistake had been made with respect to the period, for, that, by the words "*present year*," made use of in his budget-speech of the 13th of June last, he did not mean the year according to the Calendar, but the "*financial years*," ending on the 5th of April, 1804. Never was there so barefaced a falsehood as this uttered before in a public assembly, however puerile its purposes or despicable its character. The words of the budget-speech were these: "The committee must be aware, that, though Parliament may determine to raise so large a part of the supplies within the year, yet, it must be obvious, that a very considerable part of this sum cannot be raised within the *present year*, I will, therefore, only calculate the sum to be produced by these taxes, *in this year*, at 4,500,000l." Is there, then, an honest man in the whole world, who will not join in characterizing as an impudent falsehood, the above-mentioned assertion which the ministerial newspaper reporters have dared to attribute to the Doctor? Let us take one more proof. There is now lying before the Parliament an official account from the Treasury, the Doctor's own shop, entitled, "An account of the disposition of grants for Great-Britain, given for the services of *the year 1803*;" and, this account, after enumerating the several

\* See the Doctor's budget-speech, Register, Vol. IV. p. 909.

services and their expense, concludes with a statement of the ways and means for meeting the said expense, and, amongst those ways and means, observe, for the services of the year 1803, are included the war-taxes according to the budget-estimate, that is, 4,500,000l. Is it not clear, then; is it not a fact to be denied by no one who has any regard for truth, that the Doctor calculated, and that the Parliament and the foolish people relied, upon a produce of war-taxes to the amount of 4,500,000l. in the year 1803? 'So much the better,' some one will say: 'those who relied upon the Doctor ought to be deceived, ought to be ruined.' Granted: but that is another question. Far be it from me to lament, that they are, thus betimes, made to *feel* the effects of their selfishness and credulity; but this has nothing to do with the financial fact that I have been stating. The war-taxes of 1803 were estimated at 4,500,000l. The Parliament imagined it was imposing taxes, for that year, to that amount; and, those taxes have yielded only 1,800,000l.—What may be the produce of the war-taxes during this present or any future year, I will not take upon me to state; but, if all the other taxes now existing continue unrepealed, and keep up to their present produce, I will venture to predict, that the now-existing war-taxes will not produce more than 6250,000l. a year, that is to say, *half the amount* at which they were estimated by the minister and relied on by the Parliament and the people.

**THIRD:** How, then, are we to meet the annual *Expenditure*? And, what is the magnitude of that expenditure, compared with the amount of the annual income of the nation? In the year 1803, a year of half war and half peace, the expenditure amounted to 50,840,078l. and the income to 35,858,373l., including war taxes. This leaves a deficiency of nearly 12,000,000l. to be supplied by loan, and, that deficiency was so supplied, or nearly so, last year, and must be so supplied every year, and, I apprehend, to a much greater amount; for, when we consider the expenses in the barrack department, and in several other branches of expenditure, which have been studiously kept back from the last year's statement, we cannot estimate the total expenditure of the present and every future year, of even *this* sort of warfare, at less than 60,000,000l. Therefore, however he defer his loans, by whatever art he may attempt to hide the path to bankruptcy from our eyes, the loans must come at last, or, in one shape or another, the national debt, or rather the amount to be annually paid by the people as the in-

terest of that debt, must go on increasing.—The Doctor told the Parliament, that his budget of war-taxes of the 13th of June last, would provide, without any addition to them, for the vigorous prosecution of the war, and for the carrying into effect all those great purposes, of which he was pleased to speak on that memorable occasion. But, behold! he and his patriotic colleague, Citizen Tierney, are now preparing another budget of war-taxes, notwithstanding the Citizen's repeated promise to the people of Southwark to "lighten their burdens." They, as was observed on a former occasion, may easily *impose* new taxes; but, to *collect* them will be a different sort of task. The Bishop of Landaff called out to the ministry to tax us as much as they pleased; but, the question is, not how much taxes we are willing, but how much we are able, to pay; how much can possibly be raised. As to the will to contribute towards the support of the government, or of the war, that is by no means wanted; but the ability to contribute in a greater degree than we at present contribute, I very much doubt; and, my doubt is fully warranted by the experience of the last year. The Doctor boasted, in the month of February last, that he had imposed new taxes on the people to the amount of 17,000,000l. per annum. It is now nearly a year since the last of these taxes were imposed; and, if a comparative statement were made out up to the present month, I am certain it would appear, that he has not added 3,000,000l. to the annual revenue. To what end, then, is he about to impose more new taxes, seeing that what is added under one name is deducted under another? "If," according to the old saying, "he has it in meal, he cannot have it in malt." Recourse must, therefore, be had to loans as large as ever, or the war must be put an end to upon any terms, or the interest of the public debt must go unpaid, which last produces that state of things which has been termed a national bankruptcy, and which, though long in coming, may, at last, come in good earnest.

**FOURTH:** The Doctor had been warned, that, unless the *Debt* could be prevented from augmenting to any considerable annual amount, the "capital, credit and confidence" of the country must fail. Therefore, at the commencement of his war, he thought he was providing against this evil by imposing war-taxes, wherewith to prosecute the contest without making any addition to the debt by the means of loans. He did, indeed, acknowledge, that his intention was, to borrow annually to the amount of 6,000,000l. but he observed, at the same time, that, as the

Sinking Fund *reduced* the debt 6,000,000!. Annually, there would, upon the whole, no *addition* to the debt take place. I remarked, at the time, that this was either an attempt to deceive the public, or a proof that the Doctor was himself grossly deceived; and, I asked, why, if the Sinking Fund really did *reduce* the debt in the sum of six millions annually; if this *reduction* was a reality, I asked, why do you not, during the war, suspend the operation of the Sinking Fund, make no loan at all, and, thereby save the expense of bonuses and discounts and charges of management to the amount, perhaps, of half a million annually? upon which I was told, by way of answer, that I was "an assassin, stabbing at the vitals of my country." A bad name, certainly, for a man whose proposition, if the Sinking Fund be not a downright humbug, went merely to the saving of the nation the sum of half a million of useless annual expense! Really, from the acrimony and rage, to which, upon this subject, my opponents have given way, a stranger to the controversy would, were he first to dip into their writings, were he to hear them reviling me as a "political swindler," a "cheat upon a grand scale," a "defrauder of the widow and the orphan," he certainly would conclude, that I myself owed the whole of the debt. A poor creature indeed, however, should I be, were such senseless abuse, though backed with the blubber Mr. Sheridan's "true English feeling," to tinge any sentiment that I entertain upon the subject. — The amount of the national debt must increase with every new loan. It does so increase. At the close of 1802, the funded debt amounted to 547,000,000!, at the close of 1803, it amounted to 581,000,000!, not including the addition which has been made to the unfunded debt, which at the end of 1802, amounted to 21,000,000!, and which now amounts to 26,000,000!, an addition which the Doctor has made in consequence of his desire to make a proportionately smaller and more perceptible addition in the shape of loan. Millions upon millions are quietly borrowed in the shape of Exchequer Bills, but would excite great outcry and alarm, if borrowed in the shape of loan; and, though the dismal hour of reckoning must at last come, the trick does, in the mean-time, answer the purpose of the minister, who, if he accomplishes no other object, keeps his place for some time with less trouble than he could do, were he to show the people the real state of their affairs. This is what the Doctor has been attempting; but, he might have read, in the fable of the cudgeled ass, that it

is not for all animals to play tricks with impunity.—I shall, perhaps, be told, that, in stating the continual increase of the *debt*, I should also have stated the continual and, proportionately, more rapid increase of the *Sinking Fund*; that, while I was stating the funded debt to have increased, during last year, from 547 millions to 581 millions, I should not have omitted to state, on the other hand, that the Sinking Fund had increased from 67 to 77 millions, and that, therefore, though there was, in the whole debt, redeemed and unredeemed taken together, an increase of 14 millions, there was, in the *unredeemed* debt alone, an increase of only 4 millions. Now, this reproof I certainly shall meet with; and who would not, from such reproof, conclude, that the Sinking Fund *lessened* the debt of the nation? Who, when they are gravely informed in the official accounts, and even in the speeches of his Majesty, that such and such provisions have been made, and such and such sums applied, for the "*reduction*" of the national debt; who, when they receive such information, through such channels, would not believe, that *some* reduction, at least, has been made in that debt, especially when they are, with the same degree of solemnity, told, that 77 millions of the debt have been actually "*redeemed*"? What do we usually understand by the word *redeemed*, as applied to the affairs of debtor and creditor? When a man, who has contracted a debt by way of mortgage or bond, *pays that debt off*, he is said to have *redeemed* his mortgage or bond, and, it follows, of course, that he *no longer pays interest* on the money advanced him upon that security. I ask whether this is not the meaning, and the only meaning, which, in such transactions, is given to the word *redeemed*? Every one who has the least regard for truth will say, yes. Well, then, I ask, do not nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand persons; in short, do not the whole nation, some, and those a very few, persons excepted, really believe, that, by the means of the sinking fund, we have bona fide *redeemed* 77 millions worth of stock, that we have actually *paid off* 77 millions of our debt, and, of course, that we *no longer pay interest* upon those 77 millions? I ask, whether this notion be not generally, and, indeed, universally adopted; and whether the whole phraseology and tenor of the financial papers and accounts are not calculated and even intended to propagate and to establish this notion? And, if I am answered in the affirmative, am I not justified in calling upon my countrymen to join me in de-

precating the longer existence of a deception so disgraceful to us all, and so big with calamitous consequences? — **NONE** of the stock has been *redeemed*: **NONE** of the debt has been *paid off*: and, we *continue to pay interest* on every farthing of the debt that existed before the sinking fund began and that has been created since. The *unredeemed* stock consisted, at the beginning of this year, of 484 millions, and the *redeemed* stock of 77 millions; and, who would imagine, that we should have interest to pay on any more than 484 millions? Yet, it is a truth, and a truth, too, well worth the serious consideration of both king and people, that we shall still have *to pay interest upon the whole 561 millions*, and that *no reduction* takes place, or can take place, while the present system is pursued. There are persons, differing, I confess, from myself, who saw, in the original plan of the sinking fund, a principle of real reduction; but, if this principle ever did exist, it was annihilated by Mr. Addington's **measure of May, 1802**; and, **therefore**, with any exception as to the effect of that principle I need not embarrass the simplicity and cripple the force, whatever it may be, of my reasoning, which applies to what is and to what will be, and not to what might have been if different measures had been adopted, or if different men had had the management of our financial concerns. Here, then, I return to the simple and incontrovertible proposition, that, whether our debt consist in redeemed or unredeemed stock, whatever be the shape or name it may assume, to us, either as individuals or as a nation, it matters not, so long as no reduction takes place in the annual interest which we have to pay on account of it. If this be granted me, and I should like to hear the reasons on which it could be refused, it only remains for me to show, that no such reduction has taken, or can take place, but that, notwithstanding the operation of the sinking fund, the interest goes on increasing in an exact proportion to the increase of the *whole* of the debt redeemed and unredeemed, funded and unfunded,\* as will appear by the following figures, showing the amount of the debt and of the interest paid on account of debt, in the years 1798 and 1803 respectively.

Debt.	Interest.
1798 - £443,490,014	£20,108,884
1803 - £588,581,542	£25,066,211

\* The difference produced by mixing the amount of **Exchequer Bills** with that of stock is too trifling here to be of any consequence, worth notice, as to the result in view.

Now, let it be observed, that in the debt of 1798, there are only 37 millions of what is called *redeemed* debt, while in the debt of 1803, there are 77 millions; but still the proportion of *interest* is exactly the same! Where, then, I again ask, are we to look for the alleviating effects of this *redemption*? When, oh, when! are we to begin to feel its powers of affording us relief? — But, am I asked: 'to what do these questions lead? Where is the use of this gloomy exposition?' My answer is, that, by men of mind and of heart, men who love their honour and their liberties better than miserable pelf, this exposition, if it be true, will be welcomed; because such men would rather see danger at its distant approach and prepare to resist it, than wait its arrival and basely plead the inutility of resistance. My answer is, that, when my object was to inquire into the effects which the public debt would have as to the duration and the result of the present awful contest, this exposition became a natural and necessary preliminary; and, indeed, it has left little to be learned from that inquiry, it has left little else to do but to draw, from indubitable premises, an inference too obvious not to be perceived by even the most inattentive of readers: for, if the last five years, four years of war and one year of peace, have added 5 millions to the annual amount of the interest to be paid on the national debt, would it not be something worse than infatuation to expect or to hope, that, if the present war should last five years, another 5 millions will not be added to the amount of that interest? And, then, how is the war to be supported, and this interest duly discharged? This is the question, to which I want a rational answer. — The way in which it is generally answered, if it can be called answering, is, to ask: 'how did we support the *last* war, and, at the same time, duly discharge the interest of the debt, though the debt, and the interest also, of course, were nearly doubled in amount before the end of that war?' Whoever pursues this course of reasoning must have previously adopted the principle, that an increase of a pound has the same effect as the increase of a penny. But, in answer to those who predicted great embarrassments and fatal consequences from the immense magnitude of the debt, it was always answered: 'no matter how great the debt is, so long as our trade keeps pace with it; and, as in the instances of Mr. Rose and Mr. M'Arthur, they produced you figures to show that the increase of the trade had kept pace with the increase of the debt,



during the whole of the war, and that, if the interest of our debt had doubled, during the war, our trade also had doubled during that period. At the breaking out of that war, the total official value of our exports and imports, was about 35 millions; in the last year of the war, they amounted to about 69 millions; at the former period, the annual interest of the national debt, was about 12 millions, at the latter period little short of 24 millions. Here the proportion is kept up, and, if it were still kept up, there would, perhaps, be little occasion for alarm. But, what is our present situation? We have all the interest of doubled debt to pay annually, while our trade has made a retrograde motion of five years; so that we have now a trade less than that of 1799, with a debt of 1803. Nothing can furnish so clear and so striking an illustration as a comparison in the proportion between the amount of the trade, and of the interest of the debt, in those two years respectively.

Amount of Imports and Exports	Interest of Debt
1798—£ 57,733,955	£ 21,472,166
1803—55,436,231	25,066,241

Where, then, I repeat my question; where are we to look for the means of supporting the present war, and for discharging, at the same time, the annually increasing expenses of the debt? Am I again told that there will be little or no annual addition to these expenses, because the greater part of the supplies are, according to the Doctor's plan, to be raised within the year? In the first place, even the Doctor allows that he shall *always* take a loan (he should have said as long as he could get it), of 6 millions a year, and this year he is about to take a loan of 10 millions, to say nothing of the 6 millions for poor Ireland, three times as much as it has been usual to borrow annually for that country, and, the interest of which, if it be paid at all, must, in great part, be advanced, and indeed finally paid, by Great Britain. At any rate 10 millions a year will be wanted by way of loan, which together with funded Exchequer Bills, will, in course of five years, have swelled the annual interest of the debt to 30,000,000l. at least.

If what I have above advanced be not extremely erroneous, the conclusion is, that, in consequence of our reduced trade, our present means are inadequate to our wants.—Last year, which was half a year of war and half a year of peace, the total expenditure of the nation, including interest of the debt, amounts to 50 millions (I make all these statements from the official accounts.) The expenditure of the present year, when we consider the expenses that have been incurred

and have not yet come to account, we cannot estimate at less than 55 millions. But, suppose us to continue on in this inglorious defensive war, and suppose the annual expenditure, on account thereof, to be no greater than it was last year, how are we, with our present trade, to meet that expenditure? And, must we not, at the end of a year or two, withhold payment of the annually increasing interests of the debt, or crouch down at the feet of the enemy? Will it again be answered, that *new taxes* are to be levied? An addition to the revenue without an addition to the trade cannot take place; for, if we were to allow it to be possible, to carry on the war this year, for instance, without any loan at all, and, of course, without making any addition to the interest of the debt; if we were, for argument's sake, to allow, that the Doctor, accepting of the offer of a venerable prelate, were this year to squeeze the whole fifty millions out of the nation, what would be the consequence? Would not a squeezed nation be like a squeezed lemon? Would it not yield less and less at every squeezing? Do you not, by eating the seed, cut off the hope of a future harvest? And, does not our present state itself afford us a practical illustration of this truth? Has not the Doctor heaped upon us loads of new taxes, and has not our trade, have not our future means of meeting those taxes, decreased in a fearful degree?—Since, therefore, we cannot, with our present trade, defray the annual interest of the debt and support the other branches of our expenditure, it follows, that we must revive and extend our trade, or leave the interest of the debt unpaid, or diminish our other expenses by putting an end to the war, be the terms of the enemy what they may; and, those who think it impossible that our means should receive an extension, while in the hands of the right honourable Doctor, by whom they have been so much contracted; those who think it impossible, that our country should, under this man's administration, recover abroad that respect and influence which is absolutely necessary to counteract the commercial as well as the political and war-like hostility of France; those who think thus, must allow, that our only choice lies between bankruptcy and slavery, unless our affairs are speedily committed to other and abler hands.\*

20th April.

W. M. COBBETT.

\* Several of the accounts, referred to in this address, have been laid before Parliament during the present session, and have not yet been pub-

## IRISH HALF-PAY.

SIR,—From the observations relative to the Irish half-pay officers, that occurred in course of the debate in the House of Commons on the 12th instant, I am convinced that those members who spoke in their behalf, and the public at large, are not acquainted with their situation; and you will confer a lasting obligation on them by inserting the following statement.— Previous to the union of the two countries, the military establishments of each was distinct. That of Ireland had much less pay, allowances, pension, &c. &c. than that of England; and, officers as well as men, when they entered, either conceived themselves intitled to those fixed allowances. Circumstances rendered it advisable to change the forces of the two countries, in course of the last war; and the first step taken by the late ministers, was, to augment the Irish pay, that the British regiments sent there might not suffer by the change. On the conclusion of the treaty of peace, several of those regiments were reduced, and not a doubt was entertained that their half-pay and pensions would either be increased, or that they would be reduced on the British half-pay. But such was not the case. They were placed, by the economical ministry, on the old Irish allowance; on an establishment to which they never belonged! I shall not detain you. Sir, by stating the loss sustained by the officers in consequence; but, the situation of the poor old soldiers of these regiments is so cruelly hard, that I beg your attention to it. Had they been permitted to complete their time of service in their own country, they would have received a pension of nine pounds a year; but, because they did so in Ireland, they are left with only six Irish pounds, and I can assert this to have been the case with many men, who, of the whole of their long service, had not passed more than one year in Ireland. This certainly has the appearance of injustice, and it will be most satisfactory to those concerned, to have it explained.—I beg leave, before I conclude, to express my surprise at the reasons given by Lord Castlereagh against granting payment at par to those officers who are in England, “because it was “optional with them to reside here or in “Ireland.” No man can know better than his lordship, that the majority of those officers are British. And does he really think

lished by me; but, they will all be found in the last number of the First Volume of the PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES, which volume will be completed in about a fortnight from this time.

those officers imbibed such notions of Irish happiness as to give up their homes, their friend, and country to live there? Does his lordship think that if they had done so, they would still have been in existence, upon the *half-year's allowance*, the only aid they have yet received from the Irish Treasury.—I am, Sir, your sincere friend.—AN OLD DIER.

## NAVAL INQUIRY.

SIR,—Having in two former letters conveyed to you at some length, my remarks on the opposition made in the House of Commons to Mr. Pitt's motion for inquiry into the conduct of the Admiralty; and also on Lord St. V.'s claim to future confidence, from past services, I venture to address a third to you, which closes what I have to say on these subjects.—In order to examine with accuracy, Lord St. V.'s fitness for his present situation, I will, for the moment, allow his former services, in the active duties of his profession, all the value and importance claimed for them by his most zealous partisans; I will allow his errors, as First Lord of the Admiralty, to have been inconsiderable, and of a nature easily rectified; and, that his general unpopularity in the various departments of the navy is unmerited, I will further, for the sake of argument, allow, that though his lordship's health is bad, it yet permits him to attend his duties during half the year; yet, after accepting the whole of this liberal allowance, I presume no one will be prepared to assert, that Lord St. V., is the man best qualified to preside at the Admiralty, through a period so critical, that the neglects of a *single* day might sink this country into a province of France. And where is the man, who admitting Lord St. V.'s inability from any cause, and even to a trifling extent, will be hardy enough to maintain, his professional colleagues are so well chosen, that the customary objections which have been made for ages, against important offices devolving to the execution of deputies, are inapplicable with respect to them? If, in the present conflict, we ultimately obtain success, it must be by an exertion of *mental and corporeal* vigour in our rulers; whilst esteem and confidence towards them, must be added to sense of duty in those who serve. I apprehend, therefore, that the inexpediency of Lord St. V.'s continuing the marine minister is, from the above reflection alone, fully established; it surely then becomes Parliament not to delay unnecessarily, even for a single day, the taking effectual steps for his removal, least even

[596] should arise, rendering a change impracticable. The present general system of the Admiralty is, in my estimation, so pregnant with mischief to the state, that its continuance hourly endangers the safety of the country, and not only the welfare, but the very existence of our navy. To lull the country, awakened in some degree, to a sense of that danger, the supineness of the present Admiralty has brought upon them, to strengthen the death-like slumber, Mr. Pitt's motion had a little roused it from, by a stimulus well timed, though ill supported, and in some degree, I regret to observe, ill conducted; (in a great measure from his having expected the papers he moved for would be granted) I say, that to lull the country into its former lethargy, the Admiralty has lately made some addition to our force under Lord Keith; they have ordered some gun-boats to be built, and a few armed vessels to be hired; these additions pompously announced and boasted of in Tucker's Gazette, are so inadequate to our wants, so wretchedly trivial in their amount, that they are here noticed, more to expose a paltry attempt at deceiving the public into a belief that all is *now* well, than from any opinion, on my part, that their security is increased. The gun-boats which the Admiralty has ordered to be built, are inconsiderable in point of number, nor are they to be finished in less than three months; and, if we are rightly informed, the attempt at invasion must long before this be terminated in some way or other. The Admiralty's attention has not, I believe, *yet* reached our *large ships*, for I have heard of no provision, even for supporting a continuance of our present number, daily preyed upon by increasing defects, and falling victims to unprecedent losses, from want of sufficient and timely repair. This destruction of our large ships, is one blessed effect of Lord St. V.'s economy! With this description of force, were the Admiralty instantaneously to adopt the wisest measures, our navy could not be saved from feeling the baneful consequences of former neglects. To secure our coasts effectually, to protect our trade and foreign possessions, to be prepared against probable events, (such as a Spanish war, a Northern confederacy, or unreasonable pretensions on the part of America), we ought to have thirty sail of the line added to our present force, with a full proportion of frigates and smaller vessels; and to keep up this establishment, we ought to launch five or six sail of the line annually, during the continuance of war! Whereas, in the course of the two next years, and with assistance from

the merchants yards, I believe, only four ships of the line can be launched. It frequently happens that a 74 gun ship is 6 or 7 years building in the King's-yards: in the merchants' yards, (where exigency alone leads us to build,) not more than half that time is allowed, which accounts, in some sort, for the shorter duration of ships built in the latter; as their large timbers have not been so thoroughly seasoned, by long exposure before being covered in. From these premises, and the known deficiency of timber fit for the construction of large ships, the neglect of the present Admiralty may be justly appreciated.— It is said, that within this last year, we have lost (wrecked or foundered) twelve ships of war, many of which were ships of the line; besides this, several in the same period have been found unserviceable. To what is such a rapid diminution of our navy to be attributed, whilst our ships have been little battered by shot, or strained by carrying sail, to attain, or avoid an enemy; but to their imperfect state, or the imprudent method of using them!— I am aware, that it will be said, had we the great increase of ships I have proposed, men could not be procured to man them; but this I do not admit, supposing *liberal* bounties offered, and other proper means resorted to. The present Admiralty have certainly done much towards disgusting our seamen with the naval service, by compelling those pressed, during the last war, to continue on board our ships up to this time; and, in many instances, without the smallest indulgence of leave to set foot on shore; nor have they had any advantage, beyond what a sailor entering to-morrow, becomes entitled to; yet the generosity of their nature, would make them, I am confident, disregard such grievances when called to defend all they hold dear. Besides, a certain number of sea-fencibles, militia, and other troops, might indisputably be more profitably employed by forming part of the complement of these ships *stationed* to prevent invasion, than in any other mode of opposition; nor can we doubt their volunteering for such service if invited to do it.— The Admiralty are fruitful in projects, for diminishing their unpopularity, by imposing upon and cajoling the people; it is through a stratagem of this nature, that their intention is signified of bringing forward a bill to better regulate the “distribution of prize-money;” this Mr. Tucker exultingly offers, and sarcastically calls it, “an instance of that oppression the Board of Admiralty are accused of practising;” the phrase thus ironically used, may be literally true.

rally understood; the bill Mr. T. speaks of, is a fresh instance of their oppression, as I am prepared to prove; for had not the Admiralty in view only, as I fear, of securing for themselves the popularity of this measure, thwarted a similar one proposed by Sir W. Scott in the House of Commons near two years ago, it would have taken place at that time, under most able direction; and, when there was *some* prize-money to share, which unfortunately there is not at present. But the popularity of this bill was wanted by the Admiralty to counterbalance the unpopularity of the bill for Naval Enquiry. This inference may be called severe and uncandid; but, is the fact from whence it is drawn a doubtful one? Apply to Sir W. Scott, his testimony will establish it; as to any want of candour I may be taxed with, in consequence of my deduction from it, I beg to observe, that the abuses respecting prize-money, and the proper mode of correcting them, were too strikingly obvious for any investigation being necessary, previous to bringing forward a bill for that purpose; when this is considered, and that notwithstanding such facilities, a delay of near two years has taken place since Sir W. Scott's motion, I trust, that to the generality of your readers, my inference will appear fair and allowable; some unprejudiced men, have drawn a much stronger from the same premises, and talk of the whole as a *job*! Lord St. V.'s partisans will never consider this, or any thing else I have written as impartial. I have no expectation of gaining such approbation from them, it is reserved for men who represent his lordship as faultless, unaccountable to any for his conduct, and possessed of most other attributes of the divinity.—These are Lord St. V.'s claims; nor can I forbear opposing to them a recollection of the extreme modesty which characterised Lord Howe when filling the same situation, and on occasions of comparatively trivial importance; and the want of support both in and out of Parliament, that excellent man, and most able officer had to contend with. His honour, probity, and disinterestedness were never called in question; revenge, partiality, and intrigue, were strangers to his breast. Such was Lord Howe! Since his death the majority of the service have been ready enough to exclaim, "he was a man, take him for all in all, we shall never look upon his like again!" But he had the failings of a man, he was subject to error, and stood in need of allowance, which the purity of his intentions ought to have secured him. When First Lord of the Admiralty, he thought it a duty

he owed the public, (but, I believe his opinion was ill-formed) to set aside three or four captains, on a promotion of flag officers; such a measure had been adopted in former cases, it has since in many; more remarkably than others, towards Capt. Hotchskys and Graves\*. On Lord Howe's doing this, a general clamour arose; Parliamentary Enquiry was made into his conduct, and a very few votes only rescued this conscientious minister from censure. How changed the scene! But, though justice may slumber, it does not sleep; the time may quickly come, when, in defiance of all opposition, the general conduct of the Admiralty, and their furious oppression of individuals, will be constitutionally, but forcibly dragged to light, by the representatives of the people: tales worthy the reign of terror will then be made known!—I have, Mr. Editor, written this, and my two foregoing letters, from no private or interested views; I thought it my duty to communicate my opinions to the public, on a most important topic, on which very few possess information; (the greater therefore is the fault of those professional men, who hearkened to with attention and interest, have misled where they should have enlightened.) Having no seat in the House, I have sought to publish my opinions in as unexceptionable a mode as I could, by soliciting their insertion in the paper of a man whose patriotism I esteem. I thank you for giving them a circulation more general, than I could otherwise have obtained for them; and, though it will be matter of regret to me, should the motives that influenced my pen be misinterpreted, I cannot by any accusation, folly, malice, or wickedness may bring forward, be made ashamed or sorry, that I endeavoured by every possible means to serve my country.—I remain, Sir,

\* Capt. Hotchskys was refused his flag by Lord Spencer, because he had not seemed anxious to be employed during the last war; and, afterwards by Lord St. Vincent, because Capt. H—'s agent had received the pay offered him for Mr. Hotchskys as a superannuated captain; yet Lord St. Vincent admitted, when questioned on the subject, that had the agent refused to receive the pay he took, it might have been construed into an abandonment of the service on the part of Capt. Hotchskys. Capt. R. Graves was passed over by Lord Spencer; and, on application to Lord St. Vincent, was ultimately refused his flag, on account of some recently discovered defect from insufficiency of age or service, in his qualification, when passed as lieutenant. Will this objection be brought against or avoided by several lieutenants Lord St. Vincent has made aged 15 or 16, instead of 21 as the rules of the service require, when some years hence they may claim their flags? Perhaps they have a dispensation.

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Your obliged humble servant, — AN OLD  
SEAMAN.

## NAVAL DEFENCE.

Sir, — Having, since the commencement of the present contest, been attached to one of his Majesty's ships, I cannot resist the impulse I have long felt of requesting that you would, through the medium of your weekly publication the Political Register, communicate to the public a few particulars on a subject upon which so much has lately been said, and which, I believe, we cannot too highly appreciate; this, you will readily conceive, is our present system of naval defence: a system which, if pursued much longer must be productive of the very worst consequences. I shall, as succinctly as possible, state to you a few facts, which have for these nine months occurred under my own observation; and in doing so, I hope to be exempted from the number of those disappointed, and discontented officers alluded to by a right hon. gent. on the motion of Mr. Pitt for an inquiry. Should I unfortunately possess either, they proceed from the idea of my country having been so long under the direction of a set of men, whose only claim to popularity is weakness and imbecility. — In opposition to those who have so confidently asserted the inutility of gun-brigs, and the smaller class of vessels of war, as calculated to effect the enemy, I beg to state to you, that the ship to which I have the honour to belong, has been stationed off this part of the enemy's coast for the express purpose of intercepting its flotillas; and that scarcely a day has past, on which we have not had the utmost reason to complain of the total want of vessels of the above description. And, notwithstanding the numberless applications made to Lord St. Vincent on this head, no attention has ever been paid to it; his lordship always giving it as his decided opinion, that frigates were fully competent to the performance of any service; from this dangerous sentiment of his lordship the country has suffered innumerable disadvantages, and lost many opportunities of making it as dreadful to our common enemy as what has ever been heretofore. Yes, Sir, we have often seen with vexation and regret, those very vessels destined to invade Britain, and to deprive it of its existence as a nation, pass along their own coast in full and perfect security, and all this for want of a few gun-brigs or cutters, who could follow them into shoal water, where frigates could not act.

This melancholy truth I apply to their coasting trade, which has experienced no interruption whatever, except in a few solitary instances, when chance contributed to the success of our brave tars. Thus, Mr. Cobbett, have the enemy's whole force been enabled to elude us, and collect at a point from whence they may, if favoured a little by the elements, be in the centre of Kent or Sussex in a very few hours. So that instead of having done every thing, (which we certainly might have done,) we have done nothing; but this well suits and corroborates the characters of those whom you have so aptly stiled "safe politicians." Permit me also to say, that the sentiments of those whose local knowledge and experience enables them to form a pretty correct idea of things, and, in particular, of the probability of invasion, is very widely different from that entertained by a number of people, who, rather than rely on their own exertions for the country's safety, are ready to depend on any other case in support of their *theory*; they assert, that the navy is fully adequate to meet invasion and repel it; a principle which I think easily refuted. True, we have an immense force collected before Boulogne; but of what kind? Ships so unwieldy that in a calm or very light winds, their operations would have very little effect on the immense number of small vessels sent to oppose them. In the light winds of June and July, nothing would be more easy than for the enemy's flotilla, if attacked, to row away, and, within an hour, it would be no difficult matter for them to get out of the reach of our ships guns. In this very probable state of the case, what would be the consequence? It has also been said, that these vessels are not calculated to make a good defence, this I cannot better deny than by stating to you the particulars of a circumstance, which has given no small satisfaction to a number of those who are apprehensive of invasion; out of the great number of gun-brigs that have got round, three have only fallen into our hands, they were attached to a large squadron that sailed from St. Maloes to go to Boulogne, but a very heavy gale of wind coming on, with thick weather, they were driven out to the middle of the Channel, when in making for their own coast, they were, by the merest accident intercepted by two of our frigates, the Tribune and Hydra, when, after an infinite deal of trouble, the above three were captured; however, let it be remembered, that though at this time blowing very fresh, one of the brigs fired a thirty-six pounder

at the Tribune nine times, till, by an accident, the gun upset; another of them held the frigates a chace of seven hours! Indeed, I have heard a number of experienced officers say, that the French gun-boats are on a very admirable plan. It is well known that our vessels, of that kind, are always so filled with guns that they are rendered entirely unfit for a heavy sea, which accounts for some having sunk, &c. &c. last war. In addition to what I have already said, the truth of which I defy any one to refute; I beg to remind you, that from Cape La Hogue to Havre there has only till lately been two frigates stationed; one is now added, but seldom co-operates with us: this on an extent of coast forty leagues.—Although I fear to have too long trespassed on your time, I shall further beg leave to draw a line between the above mode taken by the Admiralty in our naval defence, and that adopted last war, when there did not exist half the cause for vigilance and exertion as in the present: it was as follows, eight or nine of our finest frigates, with a proportion of brigs, cutters, &c. &c. under the command of two of the most enterprising officers in the British navy, Sir Richard Strachan and Sir Sidney Smith, were stationed as a flying squadron between Brest and Havre; with this squadron it is well known, that the utmost terror prevailed amongst the inhabitants on the enemy's coast, and that a fishing boat dared not appear without being immediately driven back. Expeditions of some kind or other were always going on; and the many convoys of every description destroyed or taken by the above ships, is the best criterion by which we are to judge of their utility, when compared with the present unconnected and impolitic method observed by the naval administration.—T. V.

Guernsey, April 3, 1804.

#### FOREIGN OFFICIAL PAPERS.

*Proceeding in the French Legislative Body, extracted from the Official Journal of the 25th of March, 1804.*

Fourcroy, (the orator of government) spoke as follows: The session which is now concluded must make impressions of gratitude on the Fr. people. Laws the most important have been discussed in the midst of war, in the midst of the most atrocious conspiracy: but the government proceeds with a firm step in promoting the interest and glory of the country; and to our enemies remain only shame and confusion. In their despair they spread their gold and their crimes. Their ministers at Hamburg, at Stutgard, and Manich, will still be only the artists of plots. They corrupt some wretches; but their future steps will be detected as their past steps have been, and turned to their confusion.—If there are men, who, to the crime of having carried arms

against their country, add ingratitude and perjury, the government will punish them with the same calmness with which it would pardon; and the punishment shall always be personal as the crime. Neither the ties of friendship nor of family, shall be, in its eyes, any extenuation of guilt.—As to the members of that unnatural family, which wishes to inundate France with her own blood, that it may be able to reign over it, their first furies and their last criminal attacks, have placed between her and them an eternal bar. They have only been able to obtain from England permission to be her soldiers. They wish to sell her our conquests, our glory, our prosperity; they have only been able to sell to her useless crimes: let them live on the wages of opprobrium and contempt.—But if they dare to stain our soil by their presence, the wish of the French people is, that they may there find death as their recompence for two millions of citizens who have perished in the impious war, of which they have been the chief artisans, and as a return for the crimes with which, for the last four years in particular, they have attempted to overturn our territory, by their fomenting and maintaining, as far as was in their power, robbery and revolt.—Citizens Legislators, return to your homes, and make known the stability of our institutions, the loyalty of the citizens of Paris, &c.—The speaker then read the official decree of the government, ordering that the meetings of the Legislative Body should close that day (24th March, 1804.)

*Death of Pichegru.—Extracted from the Moniteur, & French Official Journal, of the 8th of April, 1804.*

The following is the substance of the juridical reports connected with the suicide of Pichegru:—Citizens Soupe, Didier, Bousquet, Brunet, Levignes, and Fleury, surgeons appointed by the Criminal Tribunal to inspect the body of the Ex-general Pichegru, and to state what were the causes which gave rise to his death, unanimously declared—That (on the 6th of April) from the Temple they were conducted into the chamber where Charles Pichegru, the ex-general, was confined. On arriving in the chamber they found a male corpse. After describing his person, and what appeared to them his age, they go on to say that he died of strangulation. They state, they found a black silk handkerchief about his neck, through which was passed a small stick forty-five centimeters long, and from four to five centimeters in circumference; which stick, forming a tourniquet of the cravat, was stopped by the left jaw, on which he lay, with one end of the stick under, and this produced a degree of strangulation sufficient to occasion his death. They then remarked, that the stick had rested by one of its ends on the left cheek, and that by moving round irregularly, it had produced a transversal scratch of about six centimeters.—The face was discoloured, the jaw was locked, and the tongue was pressed betwixt the teeth. The discolouration (*remosée*), extended over the whole body. The extremities were cold. The muscles and fingers of the hand were strongly contracted. Their opinion, therefore, was, from all they saw in the position of the body, and the idea they had formed respecting it, that the body was the corpse of the Ex-general Pichegru, and that he was guilty of suicide.—Citizen Sirot, one of the gens d'armes d'élite, was stationed near the chamber of General Pichegru, in the Temple. He had heard a considerable degree of struggling and noise,

gined that the prisoner laboured under a great degree of difficulty of breaching. He did, however, think that there was any thing which required his particular assistance.—Citizen Popon's pointe was near the same spot. He awaked at four o'clock in the morning, but heard no particular noise.—Citizen Fauconnier, keeper of the tower of the Temple, deposed, that at half past seven in the morning (of the 6th of April), Citizen Popon, Pichegru's keeper, went to light the fire in the usual manner. He was astonished at not hearing him either speak or stir. He went immediately to Colonel Ponsard, the commander of the gendarmerie, and informed him of what had taken place. Thuriot, the Accuser General, was informed of the circumstance. A medical person was instantly sent for, and all necessary instructions were given at the request of the Accuser General.—Citizen Popon, principal door-keeper of the Hall of Justice in the Temple, stated, that at half past seven o'clock (on the 6th of April), he went into General Pichegru's chamber, for the purpose of lighting his fire.—Not hearing him either speaking or stirring, and dreading that some accident had taken place, he hastened to apprise Citizen Fauconnier. He adds, that the key of Pichegru's chamber was taken away by him, immediately after supper, on the preceding evening, and that it had continued in his pocket till the time he went to light the fire in the morning.

### PUBLIC PAPERS.

*Note from the British Min. at Lisbon to the Portuguese Sec. of State, the Viscount Balsamao, relative to the publication made by Gen. Lannes, the French Min. at Lisbon, against the British Government.*

The undersigned, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty, has the honour to represent to his Excellency the Viscount de Balsamao, that, for the present he abstains from making his complaints in form to the Government of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, respecting the article extracted and translated from the French paper called the *Moniteur*, the 18th of February, and which has been printed and published in an extraordinary Supplement No. 11, of the *Lisbon Gazette* of the 19th of this month.—The undersigned will, for the present, content himself with remarking, that this infamous article, so worthy of its authors, is suited to the stile and genius of the official journal from whence it is copied; but it is altogether unworthy of a place in that which gives the translation of it in the Portuguese language; and the undersigned definitely regrets, that this remarkable essay of the liberty of the press at Lisbon, has been distinguished by the publication of an atrocious libel, invented at pleasure by the enemies of his Britannic Majesty, against the most ancient and faithful ally of Portugal.—The undersigned reserves to himself the advantage which results from this facility of printing at Lisbon, the instant his government shall authorise him to avail himself of it, for the purpose of inserting a formal denial of the absurd calumny in question; if the government, with its strong sense of conscious rectitude, its glory, and its renown, should trouble itself so far as to answer to similar accusations, and does not rather consider it to be more inconsistent with its own dignity, to treat with the sovereign contempt which it has always witnessed for the contemptible insipidities of the same kind, which its enemies have so often, but vainly,

attempted to blacken its reputation, since the epocha of the French revolution.—Signed, R. S. FITZGERALD, and dated at Lisbon, 16th March, 1804.

*Copy of the requisition transmitted by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs to Baron Edelsheim, Minister of the Elector of Baden, for the purpose of arresting the Duke d'Enghien.—Signed, C. M. TALLEYRAND, and dated at Paris, March 10, 1804.*

SIR,—I had formerly sent you a note, the purport of which was to request the arrest of the French emigrants which met at Offenburg, as the First Consul, from the successive arrests of the banditti which the English government has sent to France, and from the result of the trials which have been here instituted, has obtained a complete knowledge of the extensive part which the English agents at Offenburg have had in those horrible plots which have been devised against his own person and against the safety of France. He has at the same time learned that the Duke d'Enghien and General Dumouriez were at Ettenheim. As it is impossible that they should be in that city without the permission of his Electoral Highness, the First Consul, therefore, could not see without the deepest concern, that a Prince whom he had distinguished by every mark of friendship, should give an asylum to the most determined enemies of France, and permit them so tranquilly to project such unprecedented conspiracies. From these extraordinary occurrences the First Consul has found it necessary to order two small detachments of troops to repair to Offenburg and Ettenheim, to seize there the authors of a crime, the nature of which was such as to place those who are proved to have had a share in it out of the protection of the law of nations. It is General Caulincourt who is charged with the execution of those orders of the First Consul, and who there is no doubt will employ every care and attention in fulfilling the same, which his Electoral Highness can wish. He will have the honour to deliver your Excellency the letter I have been directed to write you. Accept, Sir, the assurance of my high consideration.

*Circular Letter of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Foreign Ministers resident at Paris.—Signed C. M. Tallyrand, and dated at Paris, March 24, 1804.*

The First Consul has ordered me to address to your Excellency, a copy of the report presented to him by the Grand Judge on the incidental conspiracy planned in France, by Mr. Drake, Minister of his Britannic Majesty at the Court of Munich, and which, as to its object and date, was connected with the infamous plot that is now before the tribunals.—The printed copy of the letters and authentic papers of Mr. Drake, is annexed to the report. The originals will be immediately sent, by order of the First Consul to his Serene Highness the Elector of Bavaria.—Such a prostitution of the most honourable trust which could be confided in man, was unexampled in the history of civilised nations. It will astonish and afflict Europe as an unheard of crime, and which, until the present moment, the most perverse government, had not dared to attempt. The First Consul is too well acquainted with the sentiments and good qualities which distinguish the members of the Diplomatic Body, accredited by him, not to be convinced that they will behold, with profound sorrow, the profanation of the sacred character of Ambassador, so basely metamorphosed into an agency of plots, stratagems, and corruption.

*Answer of the Imperial Minister.*—CITIZEN MINISTER, I return many thanks to your Excellency for the communication which you have been pleased to make me of the report of the Grand Judge, of which you have sent me a copy, and which I shall immediately transmit to Vienna, for the information of my Court. The opinion manifested by the First Consul of the sentiments and good qualities of the Diplomatic Body, which has the honour of being accredited to him, proves the justice he does to all the members of whom it consists; and unquestionably, he is not deceived in thinking that there is not one among us who does not decidedly condemn every thing which a Diplomatic Agent and his Government undertake contrary to the Laws of Nations, and the rules of right and good faith generally adopted among civilised nations.—Signed, COUNT COBENZL, and dated at Paris, March 25, 1804.

*Answer of the Russian Chargé d'Affairs.*—SIR, I have the honour of acknowledging the receipt of the letter which you addressed to me by order of the First Consul, and of the report which was presented by order of the Grand Judge, and I have hastened to transmit it to my Court. His Imperial Majesty will see with satisfaction, that his agents to the French government participate in the justice which the First Consul does to the Diplomatic Body accredited to him, and that their care to observe, on all occasions, the most rigorous principles of the rights of nations, are honourably appreciated by the Chief of the Government. (Signed) PIERRE D'OURTIL, and dated at Paris, March 25, 1804.

*Answer of the Prussian Minister.*—CITIZEN MINISTER, I took the earliest opportunity of transmitting to my Court the letter your Excellency did me the honour of writing to me on the 4th inst. and the copy of the report of the Grand Judge on the incidental conspiracy fortunately discovered by the vigilance of the police.—You know, Citizen Minister, the lively interest with which the King, my master, is inspired for the preservation of the life of the First Consul, and for the maintenance of order and tranquillity in the state of which he is the worthy head. You may therefore anticipate the effect which this communication will have on the mind of his Prussian Majesty, whoever may have been the authors and agents of this conspiracy; and your Excellency will easily foresee all the satisfaction which his Majesty will feel at the entire cessation of so many subjects of alarm for the friends of France. For in discharging the commission entrusted to me, I have considered it my duty to assure his Majesty of the perfect union existing between the August Chief of the Republic and all the servants of the state, between the whole nation, and its representatives or defenders.—It is by such a conduct that I shall endeavour to conciliate for the sacred character with which I am invested, the confidence and the regard of the government to which the King, my master, has been graciously pleased to send me.—Signed, MARQUIS DE LUCCHEZINI, and dated at Paris, March 26, 1804.

*Answer of the Danish Minister.*—CITIZEN MINISTER, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the report of the Grand Judge, respecting the conspiracy carried on in France by Mr. Drake, and I have hastened to transmit it to my

Court. The perusal of the letters and authentic papers issued by Mr. Drake, must sincerely afford all the members of the Diplomatic Body, the subject of concern, to observe that a minister has practised those intrigues which ought to be foreign to his character, and to the dignity of his functions. Every foreign minister must regret with me, that a public man can be accused of such conduct; and do not doubt but all the foreign ministers will partake my sentiments and opinions respecting the conduct of Mr. Drake.—Signed, DREYER, dated Paris, March 25, 1804.

*Answer of the American Minister.*—SIR, I have received the note which you did me the honour to address to me, with a copy of the report of the Grand Judge, relative to papers which prove that Mr. Drake, the British Minister at Munich, has held a culpable correspondence with traitors, the objects which all civilized nations must regret with horror; and that horror must be redoubled when we see that it is a minister that thus prostitutes his sacred character.—When a subordinate agent commits a base or atrocious act, it may be supposed that he is influenced by personal interest; but the actions of a minister are generally attributed to the government he represents; and even when he acts against his orders (which hope is the case in this instance) his conduct is so much identified with his government, that such acts tend to overturn social order, and to bring back nations to barbarism. I beg your Excellency to offer to the First Consul, in the name of my government, the most sincere felicitations for having happily escaped the attempts of his enemies, directed not only against his life, but against an object more dear to his heart, the happiness of the nation of which he is the chief; a happiness which is the result of his noble labours in the field of honour, and in the cabinet, and which is not yet sufficiently established, not to be deeply shaken by his loss.—Signed, LIVINGSTON, and Paris, March 26, 1804.

*Answer of the Bavarian Minister.*—CITIZEN MINISTER, I have received the letter by which we have communicated to me the report of the Grand Judge on the scandalous and criminal intrigues of Mr. Drake, Minister of his Britannic Majesty to my Court. I do not hesitate to assure your Excellency, that the Elector will manifest, by measures the most severe, the most efficacious, and most conformable to his personal friendship for the First Consul, the grief and indignation which this Prince must feel, in consequence of the vile and iniquitous designs which have been so daringly meditated and followed up, within his state, under the mask of a sacred character.—I should in vain endeavour to express to you, Citizen Minister, how deeply I deplore the outrage resulting from the transaction against the respectable functions which I exercise. It impresses me, however, with the strongest sense of your attention, in informing me of the justice done by the First Consul to the sentiments of all those who have the honour of being accredited near his person. I shall ever be ambitious to obtain his approbation, as flattering recompence for my zeal, and as the most honourable means of meriting the regard of my Sovereign.—Signed, CETTO, and dated at Paris, March 26, 1804.

[The rest of these answers next sheet.]